Dyn. 8. 58. 100

A SERMON OF REpentance.

A very godlie and profitable Sermon preached at Lee in Essex by Ar*thur Dent, Minister of Gods word:* and published at the request of *sundrie godlie and well dis*posed persons.

1581.

The vij. of March.

Ionach. 2. 8.

They that waite vpon lieng vanities forsake their owne mercie.

Imprinted at London, by Edmund Bollifant, for Iohn Harison, and are to be solde at the Greybound in Paules Churchyard.

1588.

In Concionem Arthuri Dent G. Pewdæi Carmen.

MAturè reſipiſce, precor, peccataq; linque,
Qui legis aut audis, quiſquis es, iſtud opus
Sin noua peccatis peccata prioribus addes,
Olim hæc te contra Concio teſtis erit:
Hac aliquot lecta flentes ſua crimina, multum
Mutarunt mores, & noua vita placet.

The ſame in Engliſh.

THou that doeſt read or heare this (worke,
I wiſh thee to do this:
Repent in time, and ſinne forſake,
Amend that is amiſſe.
But if thou wilt adde ſinne to ſinne,
not minding to amend,
This Sermon ſhall a witneſſe be,
againſt thee in the end.
Some that haue heard this read of late,
lamenting much their ſin:
Haue changde their former manners,
and a new life now begin.

99:00 Render 15 May 1899

TO THE READER.

ALthough I was moſt vnwilling that this poore talent & trauell of mine ſhould euer haue bene broched abroade, and come to light; both bicauſe it may ſeem as a Candle lighted at noone day; as alſo bicauſe manie other mens dooinges might more worthily a great deale haue been publiſhed, and committed vnto letters: yet bicauſe diuers which hearde it preached with a liuely voice, were very inſtant, yea and more than importunate with me to haue it publiſhed, vſing ſuch reaſons as I could not greatly gainſay, I did at the laſt yeeld to their requeſt, and ſo this vntimely fruite is come abroade, to be ſolde in open markets. Let no man be offended that I haue not ſtrained my ſelfe to flie an high pitch, to ſome out the froth of mans wiſedome, and to make a great ſhew of learning, by blow-

ing the bladder of vanitie til it burſt with ſwelling. For that is not my vſe, I ſeeke eſpecially the ſaluation of the ſimple and ignorant, and therefore ſtowpe downe to their reach and capacitie. Therefore I beſeech thee gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: Read this without preiudice, like it as thou profiteſt, ſo ſhalt thou haue praiſe of God, and comfort in thy conſcience.

A. D.

A SERMON OF REpentance.

The Text, Luke 13.5.

I tell you nay: but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

THe occasion of these words of our Lorde and Saviour Jesus Christ, was, because there were certaine that shewed him of the *Galileans*, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their owne sacrifices: That is, murdered them as they were sacrificing: & so their blood was mingled with the blood of the beasts which were sacrificed. Those men therefore thought that those *Galileans* were greater sinners than all other *Galileans*, because they had suffered such things: & that those eighteene also, upon whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell and slue them, were sinners above all men that dwelt in *Hierusalem*. Wherein they did utter a secret corruption, naturally ingendred in all men

that is, very sharpely to sée into the sinnes of others, and seuerely to censure them: but in the meane while to flatter themselues, and to bée blindfolde in séeing their owne sinnes. For these men thought bicause the like iudgements did not fall vppon them, therfore they were safe enough, they were not so great sinners, but rather highly in the fauour of God: According as many do falsely suppose, that those are alwaies the worst sort of people, whom God doth most strike, and presse with his punishing hand, hauing forgotten that God doth not kéepe an ordinarie rate here below, to punish euery man as he is worst, or to fauour and cocker him as he is best, but onely taketh some examples as he thinketh good, for the instruction and aduertisement of al others, and to be as it were loking glasses, wherin euerie man may sée his owne face, yea and his owne cause handled, and that God is a seuere reuenger of sinne, that all men may learn by the example of some to tremble and beware, least peraduenture they be worthily constrained to kéepe their owne turnes, and to know what they haue deserued. These men which brought these newes to our Sauiour Christ had taken

teach this lesson: whereupon our Sauiour is iustly occasioned to correct their erroni-ous and sinister iudgement, and to teach them that they must not reioice at the iust punishments of others, but rather to be in-structed thereby to repentance.

And further to signifie, that God doth not alwaies most punish the most notori-ous offenders, as Murtherers, Théues, Robbers, Whoremasters, Blasphemers, Quarrellers, Scoffers, and such like, but reserueth them vnto the iudgement of the great day, and as it were fatteth them a-gainst the day of slaughter, and therefore he answereth them negatiuely, and saith Nay, or not so, but except yée repent, you shall all likewise perish, as if he should say, are you all of this opinion indéed, that only monstrous sinners are punished in this world, and others let alone? or that the Ga-lileans and those eightéene vpon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, were greater sin-ners than all others? Or do you thinke be-cause the same iudgements haue not light vpon you, therefore you shall steale away in the darke, and escape the iudgement of God? No, no, you are deceiued. For I say vnto you, that except you mourne and la-

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ment for your sins, and fall to some agree-
ment with God in time, (you I say, euen
you which are so ready to condemn others,
and iustifie your selues) shall not onely pe-
rish with the like iudgements in this pre-
sent worlde, but be euerlastingly condem-
ned in the world to come. So that our Sa-
uiour in so saieng, doth thunder downe a
most dreadfull sentence vpon al our heads:
for he concludeth & setteth it downe, that al
men liuing vpon the face of the earth, whe-
ther they be high or low, rich or poore, yong
or old, noble or vnnoble, learned or vnlear-
ned, simple or politike, of what estate, de-
gree, and condition so euer they be, liuing
and dieng without repentance, shall perish
and be damned in hell fire for euer. The
Scriptures are full of such thunderbolts.
Iohn 3. 18. He that beleeueth not is
damned alreadie. And 2. Cor. 13. verse 5.
Prooue your selues whether you are in
the faith, examine your selues, know yee
not your selues that Iesus Christ is in you
except ye be reprobates? Where the A-
postle flatly setteth downe that all those
which haue not Christ dwelling in their
hartes by faith, which is the housholde si-
ster of repentance, are no better then re-

probates.

prohates, castawaies, and condemned persons. But bicause the most people in these daies are grosly deceiued in Repentaunce, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets and hinderances, and also why, when, and wherefore we should repent. Therfore I haue in present intent to teach first what is repentãce. Secondlie, which bee his qualities and effects. Thirdly, when we shoulde repent. Fourthly, wherfore we should repent. And last of al, what letteth vs from repentance: which order and methode of teaching, although some may mislike (as in deede with me it is not ordinarie,) yet considering the matter I haue in hand, I thinke it not incõuenient. But to the matter. Repentance is an inwarde sorrowing, and continuall mourning of the hart and conscience for sinne, ioined with faith, and both inwarde and outwarde amendement. Inwarde, I say, in chaunging the thoughts and affections of the hart: and outward in changing the wordes, and workes, from euill to good. This Repentance no doubt was in Dauid, who when he was conuertlie re-

proued by the Prophet Nathan, and his sinnes laide before his eies, did not stubbornely defende them, and so iustle against GOD: nor yet secretly excuse them, and daube them ouer, but cried out in the bitternesse of his heart: I haue sinned, and therupon made the 51. Psalme. A Psalme indeede ful of dolour and heauinesse: wherein the Prophet bewaileth his fals, lamenteth his sinnes, and praieth euen for a new hart and a newe spirite, newe thoughts, newe affections, newe purposes of amendment of life. So that in Dauid we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting griefe, (as the booke of Psalmes doth euery where declare, which laieth him out as it were in an Anatomie) yea, and great reformation: both in inward and outward sinnes. Heere therefore beholde what is Repentaunce. Likewise Saint Peter through infirmitie hauing denied his Lorde and Maister Christ, and being pinched of his owne conscience, and wakened with the alarme of a pore Cockes crowing, went out of the Court of Pilate with an heauy heart weeping bitterly, and euer after stoutely professing Christ euen vnto the death. See then what is repentance. The Prophetes

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in the olde testament, exhorting the rebellious Iewes vnto repentance, vse commonly an Hebrewe Verbe, which signifieth, turne ye, or returne ye, and come backe againe, by the which Metaphor is ment, that like as a man that is straied farre out of his way, must turne quite backe againe the contrarie waie: So those that haue straied from the waies of godlinesse to the waie of sinne, must come backe againe as fast as euer they went forward, and altogither chaunge the course of their life: so that repentance is an earnest turning vnto God with all our hart, soule, and minde. Saint John Baptist, and the Apostles in the newe Testament exhorting vnto repentance, vse a Greeke word which signifieth a changing of the minde afterward, or after wit, so that those which through their follie, and want of former wit, haue slipped into the deepe pit and dangerous gulfe of sinne, when they come to themselues, and haue recouered their wits, will be wise afterwarde, and take heede they neuer come there againe, according to the Prouerb, The burnt childe will take heed of the fire. By this time I hope you see what is repentance. It is not euery sorow,

but

but sorowe for sinne, not for some sinne, but for all sinne, not for an houer, but for euer, not for a day, but continually, not for a weeke, but as long as we liue. Some thinke euery sorowe is Repentance, but so should worldlings repent. Some thinke euerie little pant for sinne is repentance, so should Pharaoh repent. Some thinke all weeping and lamenting for sinne is repentance: so should Esau, Iudas, & Caine repent. Some thinke euery little humbling of our selues is repentance, but so should Achab repent. Some thinke that good words and good purposes is repentance: but so should euery sicke man repent. Some thinke that reformation of wordes and deedes is repentance: but so should ciuill men repent. Some thinke that crie God mercie is repentance, and so should euery fole repent. You see therefore how many are deceiued in repentance, but if you will see what it is indeede, looke backe to that which hath been saide afore. For he that will repent in good earnest, must not hang downe his head like a Bulrush for a day onely, and so haue done, nor crie from the teeth outward, Lord haue mercie on me, and so away: but he must make a backe reckoning with diligent consideration

sideration of his former life, as did the Prophet Dauid, Psalme 119. verse 59. I haue considered my waies, & turned my feete vnto thy testimonies. So must euery one that meaneth to repent, slinke aside into some corner or out place, that there he may haue roome enough to beate his owne conscience, and to make his hart smart for his sinnes, by aggranation thereof, and weighing all the circumstances, as in the 9. of Daniel. The Church of God confesseth her sinne, not lightly, but with wonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping of one thing to another. So that it is not enough to say, I haue sinned, but to say, I haue most traiterously sinned, I haue most obstinately, carelesly, and rebelliously sinned: I haue monstrously offended in such a place, in such a house, in such company, in such a day. In such a corner in the darke I cõmitted adulterie closely, when I thought none had seene me: in such a chamber I defiled my neighbours wife: mine owne conscience both accuse me of it. In such and such companie I haue beene drunke, I haue spoken and railed against Gods word, I haue mocked the Preachers, I haue spared no othes nor filthie

speech

speech, and now O Lord, Lord what an vgly monster, and wretched villaine am I: Here I stand before thy presence all naked, blind, wounded, poore, wretched and miserable, hauing deserued a thousand damnations, if thou shouldest enter into iudgement, & trie the law with me. Therefore I beseech thée shew pittie and compassion vpon me. Annoint my woundes with the oyle of mercie: Restore mée my sight, cloath my nakednesse, enrich me that am poore, strengthen me that am weake: helpe me vp that am fallen: oh bid me not farewell. The infant ouercommeth his mother with crying, the child his father with weeping, and the seruant his maister by entreatie, and wilt not thou be intreated O Lord? Thus I say, if euerie man would speake in his conscience to God, and thus narrowly or more narrowly examine himselfe, vndoubtedly he were in the way of repentance.

But alas it is a world to see how the blind Buzzardes, and croked Canker-wormes of this world goe awry from this rule, deceiuing themselues with the bare title and naked name of repentance. Many in deed can talke of it: but few walke in it. Many

speake

speake of it: but few feele it. Many describe it: but few know it. It is hid and locked vp from the world, and reuealed onely to gods childrē. Many think they haue caught it, when they haue but the shadowe of it. It is so hie that few can reach it. It is so deepe that few can come to the bottome of it. It is so narrow, that few can enter into it. So wide, that few can comprehend it. So slipperie that few can hold it. So secret, that fewe can finde it. Therefore my deere brethren, I beseech you, let vs pray vnto our God, that he would reueal vnto vs this misterie which is hid from the world, that we may truely see it, and knowe it, finde it, and feele it, to our endlesse comfort, through Christ Jesus, which grace hee graunt vs. But now to the second point concerning the qualities and fruites of Repentance. One speciall qualitie of Repentance, is alwaies to bring with it remission of sinnes: for where true Repentance goeth before, there remission of sinnes must necessarilie follow after, not that repentance deserueth Remission of sinne, but bicause where God worketh Repentance, there he pardoneth sin bicause of his promise, as in Ezech. 18. 27. When the wicked turneth away from his

his wickednes, that he hath cõmitted, & doth that which is lawfull & right, he shal saue his soule aliue. And againe, Esa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his waies, and the vnrighteous his own imaginations, & returne vnto the Lord, & he will haue mercy vpon him. Do here we se, to whom forgiuenesse of sinnes, and the mercy of God belongeth: namely, to the penitent sinners, to those that leaue sin, and imbrace godlines: to those that forsake their owne waies and imaginations, and turn vnto the Lord. And as for such as walke on, in their owne waies, and folow the delights of sin, without any forow or purpose to leaue thē, they haue nothing to do with the mercy of God, & though Iesus Christ had suffred an hundred deaths (which coulde not be) yet shall no vnpenitent sinner haue remission of his sinnes by his death, nor any other benefits of his passion, for they belong onely to his Church and chosen people here vpon the earth. He therfore that is not of the church, he that is not grafted into Christ by Faith, he that is not a mẽber of his mistical body, can enioy nothing by Christs death. If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, & wisheroth, & men gather them

and cast them into the fire, & they burne
Ioh. 15. 6. We reade in the 29. of Deute-
ronom. howe God barreth all stubborne
sinners from his mercy, and doth most ter-
ribly throte out against them. He that hea-
reth the wordes of this curse, and blesseth
himselfe in hart, saieng: I shall haue peace
although I walke according to the stub-
bornes of mine owne hart, thus adding
drunkennes to thirst, the Lord will not be
merciful vnto him, but the the wrath of the
lord, & his iealousie shall smoak against that
man, & euery curse that is writte in the book
shall light vpon him. So that God saith
plainly, he hath no mercy for such as walke
in the vain delights of sin, & in the stubborn
nes of their own hart: adding drūkennes to
thirst: that is, ioining one horrible sin to a-
nother, yet for all this it is a wonder to see
how the blind worms of the earth deceiue
thēselues. For they think whatsoeuer they
say, whatsoeuer they do, be it good be it euil,
whether they repēt, or not repent, yet they
shall be saued by Christes death, as though
they woulde make it a bande to their sins,
and so worke that villanie against Christ. I
hope to be saued by Christes death, as well
as the best of them al, saith som. But howe

is thy repentance thou miserable wretch? Doest thou think that Gods mercy is common to all? And Christs death a balme for our sins? no, no, when it commeth to the vpshot, thou shalt stop short. For it will proue farre otherwise: For thou shalt find Gods mercie turned into iustice: & Christs death into woorme wood, bicause thou hatedst knowledge, and choosedst not the feare of the Lord. Thus you see my deere brethren, that repentance must needes go before forgiuenesse of sinnes, and where it leadeth not the way, there the gates of gods mercy are shut vp, and this is the first qualitie of Repentance. It hath also another condition, and that is to alter and change men from that they were before, not in the substance and proportion of the body, but in the qualities and conditions of the mind. For whosoeuer hath truly repented, you shall by and by see a most marueilous and wonderful change in him, so that he will not do as he hath done, nor speak as he hath spoken, nor companie as he hath companied, nor play the good fellow (as they terme it) as he was wont to do: nor run to the same excesse of riot he vsed wont. And this is it that amazeth the world, and causeth them to wonder and

some at the mouth like wild boares, and to speake euill of them that turned vnto God: for the world loueth his owne, and can not abide that God should plucke one feather from his wings. But Repentance doth violently pull men out of the clawes of Sathan, & change them from the conditions of the world: for it maketh of proud, humble: of hurtfull, harmelesse: of cruell, mike: of Wolues, Lambes: of Lions, Sheepe: of adulterers, chast liuers: of drunkards, sober men: of swearers, reuerent speakers: of haters, louers: of despisers, imbracers: of scoffers, followers: of earthly, heauenly: of Diuels, Saints. All this worketh Repentance. Paule trauailed towards *Damascus*, a wolfe, a persecutor, a bloodsucker, an hater, a despiser, but ere he came there, he was quite changed, and clean of an other mind: so mighty was he that met him by the way. When Iesus Christ sent downe the holy Ghost vpon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were some scoffers at *Ierusalem*, which mocked and saide, They are full of new wine. But the same men cried out by and by after, Men and brethren what shall we do to be saued.

Here was a most wonderfull and sodain

change. See then the force of Repentance, when God striketh it into the hart of man, and driueth the nail to the head as they say it effecteth that which all the wisdome and policie of man is not able to bring to passe, and when they haue prolled hither, and thither, and laide their heads together, and sought all the corners of their wits, yet can they not tel which way to turn their hand, or where to begin to change the hart of a man, and to conuert him to God. Therfore repentance is stronger than all the whole world, & worketh that which all men with their naturall wits, fine heades, and deepe deuises cannot compasse, for the conuersion of a sinner, is a worke supernaturall. Here then we haue a glasse to beholde our selues in, whether euer we haue repented, or no. For if we finde not this change and alteration in vs, we haue not repented, and so consequently remaine vnder damnation. Therfore let euery man looke into himself, for marke how much he is changed and altered from his former euill waies, so much hath he repented. And he that is the same man, he was, three, foure, eight, nay, thirtie yeeres ago: surely, surely, he hath not repented, and therefore abideth in damnation. I mar-

marueile then how those men which never felt any change or alteration wrought in them, nay, whose consciences tel them, that they are not chaged ne know what it meaneth, can haue any hope of saluation: vnles peraduenture they beleeue not this doctrin or thinke it to be false. I will send ouer these men to such as haue beene in the like case they now are, & yet thought they might do wel enough for all that although both blind in iudgement, and corrupt in conuersation. I haue knowne, and do know men, which before their conuersion and inward change were counted as honest men as euer brake bread, and as substantial men as they could be, as true dealers, vpright liuers, and good house-kepers as any of their neighbours: yea, and they had the same opinion of themselues too. And yet notwithstanding when they haue felt Repentance working this change and alteration in them, through the power of the spirit at the preaching of the word, and when they haue had new hartes giuen them to discern better, and new eyes to see better, as men come out of a damps, haue wondred and marueled at the palpable and grosse darknes they were in before, and haue burst forth into these words, that

they woulde not be in the same case they were afore, no not for all the worlds goods, for if they shuld haue died in that case, they were sure they should haue beene damned. But I pray you what case were they in before, were they not good honest men & well accounted of, and honest liuers, & wel taken wheresoeuer they came? Surely they were so taken in the world, but now they thinke far otherwise of themselues, their eies being opened, and their iudgements enlightned, for now they see that they saw not before, nowe they vnderstand that God condemneth many whom the world iustifieth. He thinketh this example should make ciuill and worldly men see and suspect themselues, and know their owne misery before God. For these men were as good as they, before their conuersion, and yet afterward confessed that they were plunged to the bottom of hell, & drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath eares to heare, let him heare, & he that hath eies to see, let him see: for if men will still sooth themselues for all this, that they shal be saued without feeling any change or worke of repentance, it will cost them full deare in the end. For Christs words will proue true, that whosoeuer repenteth

penteth not, shal be damned, that is, whosoeuer doth not feele in himselfe what is Repentance, and find in himselfe the qualities thereof shal be condemned. For where Repentance is, there be the qualities of Repentance, and where the qualities be absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ saith: Except ye repent, ye shall all perish: it is al one as if he had said, except ye know the truth of repentance, except ye can proue vnto your cōsciences the forgiuenes of your sinnes, except you feele a change & alteration in the bottome of your hart, of all your former leud waies & misdemeanor, you shall surely perish & be damned. But let vs yet a litle farther search out the qualities of Repentance. The Apostle in the seuenth chapter of the second epistle to the *Corinthians*, setteth downe seuen notable qualities and effects of Repentance. The first of them he nameth care. For behold saith he, this thing that you haue been godly sorte, what care it hath wrought in you, that is an earnest study and as it were a taking thought to please God. For where true repentance hath once wrought, there followeth great care afterward. Care I say, to liue in the obedience of GOD. Care to

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kéepe a good conscience. Care to reform our Housholds. Care to instruct Wiues, Children & seruants in the knowledge of God. Care to pray with them morning and euening: and generally, care to performe all duties belonging vnto God, so that repentance is not a carelesse, but a carefull thing. Let not men thinke therfore that although they welter in the carelesnesse of the flesh, & sléepe in security all the daies of their life, yet their repentance is good enough, yea, and though they spend whol daies, nights, moneths, and yéers in vanities, plaies, and pastimes, in idlenesse, fond delights: pleasure and voluptuousnesse, in negligence of all duties, forgetfulnesse of God, and contempt of all good things: yet for al this they repent for their sins, and hope to be saued as wel as any other. But alas how cā these things stande togither, to repent for sinne, and to delight in sin: to hate sinne, and loue sinne: to flie from sinne, and to follow after sin. But these men I perceiue would faine make S. Paul a lier, for he saith a mā hath neuer repented, except he be carefull afterward to please God, they say they do repent & haue repented, although they liue neuer so wretchedly, and carelesly. But when all

lieen-

licentious and lewde liuers, filthie whoremongers, beastly belly-gods, & careleſſe caitifs, come to the kingdome of God, and are ſaued, then ſhall theſe men alſo come with them to be ſaued by careleſſe repentance.

The next qualitie and effect of Repentance, is named cleering of our ſelues, that is diſcharging of our ſelues, when ſin doth accuſe vs, and lay things to our charge: for when ſin and Sathan doth terrifie the conſcience of the poore penitent ſinner, by and by he flieth vnto God, and aſketh forgiueneſſe through Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo cleereth himſelfe, and maketh his Apologie againſt ſin and Sathan, like as a man that is preſented into the Court, vpon ſuſpicion of whoredom, or any other notorious crime, muſt cleere himſelf by witnes of that which is laid to his charge. So the conſcience that is cited by Sathan before the iuſtice and iudgement ſeate of God, cleereth it ſelfe by Repentance, and aſketh forgiueneſſe thorow Jeſus Chriſt. So that heere we may ſee a wonderfull fruit of a penitent conſcience, it cannot abide the accuſation of ſin. It cannot be quiet till it be reconciled vnto God: and ſo haue peace with it ſelfe. For this is to be noted in the godly man, that

when

when he hath committed any sinne, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feeleth lead within him, and is all heauie, and cannot sleepe quietly, til he haue gotten into some corner, where he may mourne and lament to the full, and confesse and lay open himselfe vnto God, & so cleere himselfe thorowe Iesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witnes that his sin is forgiuen. Whereas contrariwise the vngodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sinne, he dispatcheth away all such thoughts, and treadeth them vnder foote, and by and by calleth for a paire of cards or tables, and some merrie companion to driue away the time, and to put out al such thoughts out of his head: and so indeed he increaseth them more and more and causeth them to rankle inwardly.

The third qualitie is called indignation, that is, a mortall and deadly hatred against sin: as when a man doth shudder and shake & as it were grind his teeth at the remembrance of his sins: for this is alwaies in the penitent person to loth and abhorre all sin from his hart, both his owne sinnes and the sinnes of other, and to hate it as the Diuell himselfe, which is the author of it, and to flie from it, as from the very cut throte

and

and hangman of his soul, and to know it to be the only thing that blindeth, that hardeneth, that separateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diseases both of bodie and soule against vs. Therefore he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stinke of it, wheresoeuer he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afraid to displease him. For the penitent person feareth alway, and being priuy to his own infirmitie and weaknes (when God neuer so little withdraweth his grace, and leaueth him alone) worketh his saluation with feare and trembling. Hee will not presume vpon former grace to commit any sin, or flatter himselfe in the mercie of God, and in the things that he hath already tasted of God, to yeelde to some little sinne, thinking he may do that, and be the childe of God well ynough, because som of Gods children haue fallen into greater: but rather he trembleth at the least motion of sinne, and is afraid of the temptations which Satan trumpeth in his way, and is afraid when the temptations of sinne are vpon him, to satisfie the hunger of sinne, but rather he fighteth a-

gainst

againſt ſin, when ſin fighteth againſt him, and preſenteth the feare of God before his eies (as godly Joſeph in the aſſault of Putiphars wife) to be as it were a tower of defence and welſpring of life, to auoide the ſnares of death.

The fift thing is deſire, that is, a hungering and thirſting after righteouſnes. For the penitent man is rauiſhed with deſire of good things: he deſireth to be euerie day better than other: he deſireth to leaue euery day ſome ſin: he deſireth to pray: he deſireth new knowledge, and new vnderſtanding of heauenly things. He deſireth to heare Sermons, and will ſtraine himſelfe to heare them. He deſireth the companie of the godly, he thinketh himſelfe in Heauen, when he is amongſt them. He deſireth the ſalnation of his very enimies, and praieth for them. All theſe and many other ſuch like deſires are in the penitent man.

The firt quality is zeale, which cõſiſteth in the earneſt imbracing of vertue, and hatred of vice, ſo that the penitent perſon is zealous in euerie good thing. Zealous of Gods glorie in all places, in all companies, and amongſt all perſons. He cannot abide that Gods honour ſhould be impeached, or

his

his name blasphemed, or his glory trampled vnder foot by wicked men, but he will open his mouth to reproue the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glorie. He is not like the Atheists, & Dissemblers, which are alwaies as is the company, that is, godly amongst the godly: a Protestant amongst Protestants: wicked amongst the wicked: a Papist amongst Papistes: a Worldling amongst Worldlings: and a Swearer amongst Swearers: a weathercocke that turneth with euery winde. The penitent man I say, is not of this stampe, but he is constant and zealous in all good things. He is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne, though he might win a whole world, or pleasure himself neuer so much, by committing a sinne against God, yet will he refuse it, for he hath learned from Christs mouth, that it shall not profite a man to win the whole world, and to lose his owne soule.

The last thing is Reuenge, that is, the penitent person is so offended with the sin he hath cõmitted, that he will be reuenged of himselfe for it. As for example, if he haue offended in Gluttony, he wil reuenge himselfe by fasting two or three daies after: If

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he haue offended in whoredome, he will be reuenged of his lusts, by haltering & bridling of them euer after: if he haue offended in couetous catching and polling of other mens goods, he will be reuenged on himself by restitution, as was godly and penitent Zacheus, and this indeed is a speciall fruit of Repentance, to reforme our selues in those things, wherein we haue most offended. Now, then you see (my deere brethren) what lieth in the bellie of Repentance, and which be hir inwards, so that we must needes now come to the vnlacing and vnbowelling of Christs words. Except ye repent (saith he) yee shall all perish: that is, except ye haue this forenamed care, you shall all be damned: Except you haue this clearing of your selues, you shal be damned: except you haue this indignation, you shall all be damned: Except you haue this feare you shall be damned: Except you haue this desire, you shall all be damned: except you haue this zeale, you shall al be damned: Except you haue this reuenge, you shall all be damned. For our Sauiour Christ doth not speake of the bare name of Repentance: but of Repentance with all his furniture, and appurtenances: so that whosoeuer hath

not Repentance with all his qualities and effects, or at the lest some measure of them, he hath no repentance in déede, and therefore shall be damned. For except ye repent, ye shall all perish. But mée thinketh that I heare some men say: Heere is nothing but damnation, damnatiō: You preach nothing but the Lawe: Let vs heare of the Gospell. My brethren I protest vnto you, that I speake of loue, whatsoeuer I speake. I desire the saluation of you all: If I could win but two in all this congregation, I would count my selfe happy, and thinke that God had greatly blessed my labours. And vndoubtedly, if I knewe any nérer way to bring you vnto GOD, than by preaching the Lawe, to make you knowe your selues: Surely, surely, I woulde vse it. Or if I could be perswaded that the preaching of the Gospell, and mercie, woulde doe you more good: you shoulde heare of nothing but Gospell, Gospell, Mercie, Mercie: But alas, I sée that euery careleſſe and ignorant man presumeth vpon Gods mercie, I sée that euery filthie liuer, and notorious blasphemer, abuseth Gods mercie, in applying it to him selfe without repentance, so that

they would make Gods mercy a cloake for their sinnes: I see that euery man would faine be flattered in sinne, and heare of it no more, but haue the Gospell preached, which in deede belongeth not vnto them, continuing in their stubbornnesse, but onely to the penitent sinner, which forsaketh himselfe and groneth, and panteth vnder the burden of his sin. Therefore when I see you humbled with the conscience of your sinnes, and grone and pant vnder the burden of them: when I see your faces blubbered with weeping, and your harts mollified, and sorrowing with care, then will I comfort you, and cease to preach the lawe. But I pray you, will you steale, murther, and commit adulterie, and yet heare of mercie? Will ye mock, sweare, blaspheme, & raile, and yet heare of mercie? Will you serue sinne, hate vertue, and followe your owne lusts, and yet heare of mercie? Would you haue plaisters before you haue wounds? Woulde you haue phisicke before you be sicke? Woulde you be let blood before you haue neede? Would you not account him a folish Phisition that wil minister phisicke to a whole man? Would you not think him

an vnskilfull Chirurgion, that will apply a gentle salue to an old festered soze, and not rather cozzie it: Then knowe you my bzethzen, that bicause you are full of grosse humozs, you must haue strong purgations, bicause you are full of olde festered wounds, you must haue cozrasiue salues, foz that is the best foz you, and the spædiest way to recouer your health: and fozasmuch as you be rough hozses, you must haue a rough Rider: and hard knobbie Timber must haue hard Wedges, and hard strokes with a bæetle. We pzeach the Lawe to dziue you to Chzist: we pzeach iudgement to make you sæk mercy: we pzeach damnation to bzing you to saluation. But to pzeach mercie and fozgiuenes befoze men sæ their sinnes, oz knowe their miseries by the pzeaching of the Lawe, is to pzeach the Gospell vnpzofitably. Foz he that is ignozant of the Law, knoweth not what miserie is in himselfe: noz what mercie is in God.

What father is there, who if his childe should plaie the stubbozne boy, and disobey him in euery thing he commanded, would stroke his head, and say he were a good boy, and not rather seuerely cozrect him, and

whippe him with a rodde? What maister will commende his seruant for doing what he list, and not what he commandeth him? euen so wee may not disobey, and doe euill, and looke to be flattered too, and not rather chidden. Let vs knowe then, that although God vse searing, launcing, cozzing, & searching of the bones, and other violent remedies, yet in the meane while hee procureth our health by them. And let vs further vnderstand, that for as much as there is none other meanes to drawe vs to saluation, but by cleansing of all our vices, and the same cleansing cannot be done but by violence, when we be warned by the doctrine of the Lawe, so as our owne conscience accuse vs, although wee like well to bee nowe and then flattered and soothed, yet let vs seeke to bee spoken vnto earnestly, to haue our faultes told vs, and to be made ashamed of them, & to haue our vnhonestly discouered and not desire to be pleased. For it were the nert way to make vs rot in our own filthinesse, if we should hold it so in secret: and it would cost vs dear ẏ setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, & in the meane season the heauenly Judge shal thunder down

vpon

vpon vs.

Therfore when any man commeth to a Sermon, let him first and formost make his reckoning to be rebuked, as meete is, and let him vnderstand, that if is for his profit, that he is not soothed. And if he haue itching eares, let him lay them away from him, assuring himself that els he is forecloſed, so as he shal neuer receiue the doctrin to his profite and instruction. And let him be content to haue his sores rubbed and bewraied, that he may be brought to that, which is for his welfare. If a man please a sicke body, what shall become of him, shall he giue him drink euery minute of an houre? shall he giue him wine, whereas he would giue him water? shall he giue him Sallets? It were the next way to poison him. To be short, it is certaine that a man doth alwaies seeke his owne death, when he would haue men to sooth him. But now which is better, either that he which hath the ordering of a sicke man, should yeeld to all his desires, or that he should bridle him, notwithstanding that he chafe and gnash his teeth, bicause he may not haue his owne wil in his desires? You see therefore how dangerous a thing

it is to flatter and raise vp men with the preaching of mercie, before they haue beene cast downe with the sense of Gods iudgemẽts. Cease therfore to open your mouths to make hue and crie ouer the country, saying: They preach nothing but the Lawe, the Law, Damnation, Damnation, vnles ye will take in Christ too, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of want of wisedome: Bicause he preacheth and crieth out that whosoeuer repenteth not, shall be condemned. For my part, I preach the Gospell to whome the Gospell belongeth, and the Law to whom the Law belongeth. I preach mercy to whom mercy belongeth, and iudgement to whome iudgement appertaineth. And therefore holde your peace and be content to be ruled by the wisedome of God. But now let vs proceed to the third generall point, which is the time when we should repent.

The holy Ghost in the Scriptures pointeth vs to the present time, & exhorteth vs to make that the time of our repentance. Ioel 2.11. Therefore, also now the Lorde saith, turne you vnto me with al your hart, with fasting, with weeping, & with mourning.

ning. Likewise in the 3. chapter to the Hebrewes: Exhort one another while it is called to day, least any of you be hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne. And in the same chapter. To day if ye will heare his voice, harden not your hartes, as in the provocation: So that now, euen now, euen now, is the time of our repentance.

Now whilst he calleth, now whilst he speaketh, now whilst he knocketh, let vs nowe therefore heare: let vs now therefore obey: let vs now therefore redeeme this day: this present Wednesday, which haue foreslowed so many dates, which haue so long hardned our hartes, which haue let so many good things run out, and spill besides: let vs take vp this date, and make it the date of our repentance. Although we could neuer be moued with any Sermon hitherto, yet let vs now be moued once at last: Let vs nowe say, this shall be my day of repentance, I will deferre it no longer, but nowe will I turne vnto my God, and forsake all my former wicked waies, and mine owne imaginations: I will now change the course of my life, and begin all new againe. I will be acquainted with Gods word, and take

counsel there how to do, and how to behaue my selfe in euery action. I will not only reforme my selfe, but also my whole household, wife, children, and seruants, according vnto the same. Thus my deere brethren, I beseech you, purpose in your harts without any further delay, and be not like to Epicures and slacke-graces, which say youth will be youthfull, and youth will haue a course, and what should we make it so holy when we are yong: tush there needes but a sigh an houre before death, let vs be merry now, we shall neuer be yonger, we will repent when we are olde. As though our soules, they had repentance in their sleeues and at their commandement, and that they could repent whē they list. No, no, these fellowes shall pay for their presumption. For God will giue them ouer to hardnesse of hart, and impenitencie, bicause they take so much vpon them, and made so long delaies, that in the meane season they might enioy the profits & pleasures of sin. Therefore good brethren let vs not put it off from day to day, but let vs now seeke the Lord whilest he may be found, and call vpon him whilest he is neere: let vs take time while

time is, for time & tide tarieth for no man. Let vs know this to be the time of our visitation. Our Sauior Christ wept ouer Hierusalem, because they knew not the time of their visitation. He reproueth the Iewes because they could discerne the face of the skie, but could not discerne the signes of the times. And surely in the ende it will turn to our destruction, if we will not know this to be the day of mercy, ỹ time of grace wherein God stretcheth forth his hand vnto vs, and wisedom crieth out in the streets. Therefore now whilest we haue the light let vs walke as Children of the light: the night commeth when no man can worke. It shall be too late to call for merry after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut vp, and repentance will be too late. Oh deare Christians, let vs remember the fiue foolish Virgins, which because they forefolowed the time, had heauē gates barred vp against them. Let vs also remember the fearefull & dolefull example of the rich glutton, which being in hell torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease & helpe that might be, and could not haue it. An hundred thousād times therefore, better it is for vs to leaue our sin

now

now to mourne for them, now and now to repent, than hereafter, alas, when it wil be too late. Better now a great deale to take some paines, to straine our selues to leaue our sinnes, and to make our hart smart for them, than to be condemned for euer, and to crie in the bottome of hel: We haue wearied our selues in the way of wickednes and destruction, and we haue gone thorow dangerous waies: but we haue not knowen the waie of the Lord. What hath pride profited vs? Or what profit hath the pomp of riches brought vs? All those things are passed away like a shadowe, and as a post that passeth by. We haue set our selues against the children of God, we haue had them in derision, & in a parable of reproch, we foles thought their life madnesse, and their end without dishonour, but loe they are counted amongst the children of God, & their portion is among the Saints. Therefore let vs knowe the time of our calling, and let vs not be worse than the foules of the aire: The Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, obserue the times of their comming. The husbandman taketh his times. The mariner watcheth his tides. Therefore,

fore, let vs also take the time and turne vnto the Lord, whilest it is said to day, which grace God grant vs.

Nowe let vs returne vnto the fourth point concerning the causes, which may moue vs vnto repentance. Herein I haue obserued nine speciall things. First, the great mercie of GOD, leadeth vs vnto repentance, as Rom. 2. The bountifulnesse of God, leadeth vs vnto repentance, saieth the Apostle. God doth continually followe vs, with his mercies and benefits, both concerning our soules and bodies, we haue no good thing, which we haue not receiued at his hands, we hold all that we haue of him, and to him are we beholding for all: great is his mercie towardes our bodies, but much greater towardes our soules, and euerie mercie and benefite, either towarde soule, or bodie, calleth vs to Repentance. He giueth vs meate, drinke, and clothing, these call vs to Repentance: he keepeth vs at his owne costs and charges here belowe, this calleth vs to repentance: the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres, call vs to Repentance. The Birdes of the aire, the Fishes of the Sea, and the fruits of the earth,

crie

crie out vpon vs both loude and shrill: Repent, repent. All Creatures moue vs to repentance. Our creation calleth, our redemption crieth, our Sanctification knocketh, and our Election moueth to repentance. What could God do more for his Vineyard that he hath not done. Therfore let vs repent.

Secondly, the iudgements of GOD moue vs vnto repentance, for all the thunderbolts, Plagues, and Punishments, which God hath throwne downe vpon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the world, are so many warning peeces vnto vs to awake vs out of the dead sleepe of sin, & to pricke vs to repentance. As in the first, Cor. 10. When the apostle had cited diuers great iudgements of GOD, against the old Israelites for diuers sinnes, he concludeth: Now al these things came vnto them for examples, & were written to admonish vs, vpon whom the ends of the world are come. So that all the iudgementes wee read of in the Scriptures, are so many admonitions, and as it were Cart Ropes to draw vs to Repentance. All the Iudgements we read of, heard of, doe see, and

heare

heare of euery daye, knocke with maine strokes, beate downe right vpon our consciences to Repentance. The vgly monsters, strange birthes, firie cõstellations, vnknowen Cometes, sodaine death, maruailous droughes, vnwonted snowes, horrible inundations, forraine wonders, strange apparitions, threatning of heauen aboue, with streaming and shooting fire, trembling of the earth vnder our feete, and our houses ouer our heades as of late day: What are all these, but as it were great Cranes with beames, and Cable Ropes, to drawe vs vp to the Lord by repentance?

Thirdly, the worde of God haleth vs to Repentance. For, as God in olde time sent his prophets both early and late, to call the rebellious Iewes to repentance: so he sendeth abroad his preachers, and messengers in these daies, to sound vp ẏ trumpet of his word, and to ring the sweet bell of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to repẽtance, but alas, howe lightly are they regarded? Who heareth their voice? But surely this is the last remedy that god hath appointed, and if this will not moue vs to repentance, if this will not cure vs, then are we altogether

ther vncurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes we haue committed, ought to be so manie spurres in our sides, to pricke vs to repentance. It is sufficient, saith S. Peter, that we haue spent the time past of our life after the lusts of the Gentiles, walking in Wantonnes, Lusts, Drunkennesse, Gluttonie, Drinkings: and all abhominable Idolatries. Therefore, it is time now to repent, Oh that men would looke backe to themselues, as they were fortie, thirtie, twentie, or ten yeeres agoe. Oh that they would call to minde, their open and secret sin, and me thinketh it should make their hart bleede within their belly, to thinke vpon them. Oh that they would consider how much time they haue mispent, and howe manie good things they haue neglected, and altogither omitted.

Fiftly, the shortnesse of our life, calleth earnestly vpon vs to repent. The time of our life is sixtie yeeres and ten, and if they be of strength eighty yeeres, yet the strēgth is but labour and sorrowe, so is it cut off quickely, and we flie away, saith the Prophet Dauid, we haue spent our yeeres as a

thought.

thought. Therefore he addeth: Teach vs to number our daies, that we may apply our harts vnto wisedome. Our life for the shortnesse, and inconstancie of it in the Scriptures, is compared to grasse, to a vapor, to smoke, to a Weauers shuttle which glideth away swiftly. Euen so the daies of man passe away, no man knoweth howe. Man is of a short continuance, saieth Iob, and full of trouble. Experience teacheth, that to day a man, to morrowe none. Hence away we must all, héere is no abiding place for vs, how sone we know not. Therefore let vs repent.

Sirtly, the small number of those which shall be saued ought to thrust vs forward to repentance. Strive to enter in at the narrowe gate: For many I say vnto you will seeke to enter in, and shall not be able, saith Christ, Luk. 13. 24. And in another place he saith, the gate is straight, and the way narrow that leadeth vnto life, and fewe there be that finde it. If men would consider of this, it would make them loke better about them, and trie with themselues whether they be of that small number or no.

Seuenthly, death threatneth vs, who is verie

very terrible to the flesh, and the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is soused and soked in the pleasures of this world. It flattereth no man, it regardeth no persons, it weigheth not friendship, it careth not for rewardes, it is very grim, vgly, and cruel, and killeth downe right where it hitteth. Therefore let vs repent.

Eightly, the day of iudgement and second appæring of the Sonne of Man, will come as a Theefe in the night, in the which the heauens shall passe away with a noise, and the Elements shall melt with heate, and the Earth with woorkes that are therein, shall be burnt vp: seeing therefore that all these things must be dissolued, what manner of persons ought yee to bee in holie conuersation and godlinesse, saith Saint Peter 2.3. The Lord Iesus shal shew himself from heauen, with his mightie Angels in flaming fire, rendring vengeance vnto them that knowe not God, and obey not vnto the Gospell of our Lord Iesus Christ, saith the Apostle, 2. Thes. 1. I saw saith S. Iohn, Apoc. 20. a great white Throne, and one that sate on it, from whose face fled away, both the earth and the heauen, and

their

their place was no more found. And I saw the dead, both great and small stand before God: and the bookes were opened, and another booke was opened, which is the booke of life, & the dead were iudged of those things, which were written in the bookes according to their woorks. And the Sea gaue vp hir dead, which were in hir, and Death and Hel deliuered vp the dead which were in them: & they were iudged euerie man, according to his woorks. In these places we see, both the suddennesse, the fearfulnesse, and glorie of Christs comming. For he shall not come poorely, and contemptuously, as in the first visitation, but he shal come very Princely, royally, and triumphantly to the great terrour of all his enimies, when a consuming fire shall goe before him, and ten thousand thousands of Angels waite vpon him: at what time the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chiefe captaines, and the mightie men, and euery bondman, and euery free man, shall hide themselues in dennes, and amongest the Rockes of the mountaines, and say to the rocks and mountains, Fall on vs, and hide

vs from the presence of him, that sitteth on the throne, & from the wrath of the Lambe, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who can stand? Apoc. 6. Therefore let vs repent.

The last thing is hell torments, than the which nothing is more intollerable. Therfore saith Christ. Marke 9. If thine hand cause thee to offend, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than hauing two hands, to goe into hell, into the fire that neuer shall bee quenched. Where the worme dieth not, and the fire neuer goeth out. The Scripture speaketh terrible to our senses, concerning the estate of the damned persons, calling it hell fire, damnation, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for euer. In the thirty chapter of the prophesie of Esay, it is called Topheth, and it is euen prepared of old, it is euen prepared for the king: he hath made it deepe and large, the burning thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord like a riuer of brimstone doth kindle it: These speeches are terrible to our senses, and may marueilously amaze vs. But if I had the tonge of an hundred men, nay of an-

an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to vtter them as some shal one day feele them, much lesse were you able to cõceiue them. If all the tortures and cruell torments that can be deuised by the wit of man, were executed vpõ some one, yet were it nothing to this. We poore wretches thinke there is no paine to a collicke, or a cruell ague. But if all collickes, agues, and all other strange diseases could possibly light vpon one man, it were but a flea-biting to that which is to come. The paine is endlesse, easelesse, and remedilesse. The daies of their hellish torments shall neuer weare out, nor their yéeres come to an end, the longer they continue, the lesse hope haue they. When as many yéeres are expired, as there be men in the world, and starres in the heauens: when as many thousand yéeres are ended, as there be Stones and Sand by the Sea shore: yet still there be x. hundred thousand times so many more to come. Those that wil not now be moued in hearing, shal then be crushed to pieces in feeling. All drunkards, swerers, whoremongers, vsurers, extortioners, liers, mockers, contemners, secure persons, iolly fellowes, roisting ruf-

ſtians, luſtie bloudes, the braue lads of this world, and all other vnbeléeuers, ſhall one day be apprehended, and arraigned before the Barre of Gods tribunall ſeate, where the maieſtie of God ſhal ſtand aboue them, with a naked ſworde of vengeance, and a ſcepter of iuſtice. The Diuell that old Sathanas ſhall ſtand on the one ſide to accuſe them, and their owne conſcience of the other ſide to condemne them, and the gaſping gulfe of hell vnderneath them readie to ſwallow them vp for euermore. Then ſhall the dreadfull ſentence of eternall woe and damnation procéede againſt them. Goe yée curſed into hel fire, &c. There they ſhall drinke as a iuſt recompence of their iniquitie, the bitter cup of Gods eternall wrath and indignation, in the kingdome of darknes, and in the fearefull preſence of ſathan, and all the curſed enimies of Gods grace, where the dolefull drumme of Gods anger ſhal euer ſound through their eares, where ſhall be weéping and gnaſhing of téeth, where ſhall be confuſion, woe, and endleſſe lamentation. Their gripes ſhall be great, their grones ſo déepe, and their garboiles ſo vntollerable, that they ſhall grin like a dog

in their infernall conuulsions, & with howling and yelling crie out: wo, and alas that euer I was borne: Oh that I had neuer bẽn borne, or that my mother had born me a toad. For then my condition should haue bẽn better than it is. Cursed was the time I was begot in, the houre I was conceiued in, and the day that I sucked my mothers paps. Cursed I was alwaies, cursed I am, & cursed I shall be for euermore. Wo, wo, how great is my torment, whose hart doth not melt, whose eares doe not glow, whose haires doth not stand vpõ his head to heare these things. Therefore deare brethren let vs repent. If the mercy of God cannot allure vs, let his iudgements scarre vs. If his iudgements can not scarre vs, let his word mœue vs. If his word cannot mœue vs, let our sinnes amaze vs. If our sinnes can not amaze vs, let the shortnes of our life dampe vs. If the shortnes of our life cannot dampe vs, let the smal number of those that shalbe saued afray vs. If that cannot afray vs, let death terrifie vs. If death cannot terrifie vs, let the day of iudgement shake vs: If that cannot shake vs, yet let hel torments shudder vs, & rent vs in peeces. For verily

my brethren, if none of all these can preuaile, if we will not for all this repent, but be obstinate, then we shall all perish, and be damned according to Christs words. Now let vs proceede to speake of those thinges which let and hinder vs from repentance, which in deede although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I will lay forth seuen speciall lets, and hinderances, vnto repentance.

The first is vnbeléefe, that is, when men will not beléeue those thinges that are spoken and prooued vnto them out of the word of God. This is it that vomiteth vp all good thinges, and poisoneth the very intrals of a man, and keepeth all good graces from vs. As appéereth Matth. 13. 58. Hee did not many great workes there, for their vnbeliefes sake. And in the 4. to the Hebrewes it is said. Vnto vs was the Gospell preached, as also vnto them, but the worde that they heard, profited not them, bicause it was not mixed with faith, in those that heard it. So that héere we may sée, although we heare neuer so much, yet if we bring not faith with vs, we shall neuer profit vnto repentance. For vnbeliefe taketh

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vp our harts for Satan, and refuseth all the wholesome doctrine of saluation, and doth so harden them in the waies of sinne, that in the end they become past feeling, and can not be touched one whit: either with the iudgements or mercies of God: but count the one as blasts of wind, and make the other a couert for their filthines. You shall note some men, who when they haue heard their sins straightly ripped vp by the word of God, and their iust damnation proued by the same, without speedy & earnest repentance, will breake out into these words of vnbeleefe. If it be as he saith, God helpe vs, I hope it is not so, I trust I shall do well enough for all this, as long as I haue a good faith in God, and doe no bodie no harme. Shall I leaue my pleasures and my profits for their sayings? What? Do they thinke none shall be saued, but such as reade the Scriptures, and heare sermons: God forbid but those which doe not go to heare sermons, should be saued as wel as they: Why may not one serue God as well at home in his house, hauing good bookes, and good praiers, as by comming to the Church to heare Sermons and seruice? Alas, these

men ſtand to much in their owne light, and bewraye what folly and ignorance is in them. For do they think to be ſaued by any other meanes then God hath appointed: or when God hath auouched any thing in his word, will they except againſt it, & ſo make God a lier? when God hath once ſet downe a thing, & proued it to their faces, will they yet replie? When God hath tolde vs that the preaching of the word is the ordinarie meanes of our ſaluation, ſhall we hope to be ſaued, although we contemne it, & neuer or very ſeldome heare it? Is not this plaine infidelitie and vnbeleefe, that when God ſaith one thing we will ſay another: when God ſaith yea, we will ſay, no, I hope not ſo. Yes ſurely that is it that ſtoppeth the way vnto Gods graces, and barreth vs out from repentance.

The ſecond let is this preſumption of gods mercy, for if men be ſharply reproued for their ſinnes, and exhorted vnto repentance, by and by they take couert, ſaying: God is mercifull, God is mercifull, as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no iuſtice in him at all: and thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occaſion

cassion to sinne, which thing the Prophete Nahum in the first of his prophesie doth sharpely reproue, the Lord (saith he) is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and wil not surely cleere the wicked. But bicause I haue spoken afore of this presuming and misapplying of Gods mercy, I will heere passe it ouer, willing you to note it as one speciall let vnto repentance.

The third hinderance is the crample of the multitude, for that doth harden and imbolden men vnto sin. As when many birds flicker and flocke togither, they fall vppon the Net without any feare: but one or two alone will be afraide. Euen so the examples of many, and many sinne companions doe imbolden men to runne through the snares of Sathan without any mistrust. Therefore it is saide in Exodus 23. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe euill. This is the thing that hindreth a great number from god: for they neuer looke vp vnto God or to his word, but stare vpon the common doings of most men, and examples of the world, thinking if they do as the most men doe, as their forefathers haue done before them, they are cocke sure and of an euen

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ground. And hereupon ariseth their diuellish prouerbe: Do as most men do, and the fewest will speake of you: but they haue forgotten S. Paules rule, Rom. 12. Fashion not your selues like vnto this worlde. These fellowes ỹ stand vpon ỹ multitude, will reason thus: We see none of the great ones of the world, none of the noble, none of the rich, none of the wise and prudent, receiue this doctrine, but only a few shackrags and beggerly rascals, and therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for vs to meddle withall. Lo what thoughts may creepe in our heades, and how slily Sathan may trumpe in our way, and blindfold vs, and leade vs away in the darke, by doting vs with the example of the multitude. Therefore let vs take heede of those pitfalles, which Sathan laieth in our way, and not be carried away with these thoughts and reasons. The wicked beare themselues in hand that they shall winne the game, and that the goale goeth on their side, and there is nothing but crowing long before it be day, and great triumphing amongest them before any stroke be striken, and that bi-

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cause we be but a handfull of people, & they a great multitude, and that in a maner the whole world agréeth with them to practise our death. Thus the deuill doth cast a mist before their eies, and closely leade them away from Repentance. Therefore deare brethren, let vs stand fast in the worde of the Lord, and not be caried away, or bowed quite downe with this raging streame of the multitude: but let vs know it to be one speciall engine of Sathan, whereby he driueth vs from repentance.

The fourth let vnto repentance, is long custome of sinne. For that taketh away all sense and féeling of sinne, and maketh it as it were another nature vnto vs: so that we may as wel alter nature, as shake it of whē it is once thus soldred vnto vs through long custome. Therefore it is said: Iere. 13.23. Can the black Moore change his skinne? or the Leopard hir spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to doe euil. Here the prophet affirmeth, that it is as hard to cure an olde disease that is bred in the bones, and to remedie a sinne that hath bene hatched and brought vp with vs, as to wash a blacke More white, or to change

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the ſpots of a Leopard, which cannot be without deſtroying of nature. And ſurely try it who wil, he ſhal find it as hard a matter to leaue an old cuſtome, whether it be of ſwearing, of gaming, of lying, or whoring, of euil company, or of any other ſinne, as to waſh an Ethiopian. Therfore it is writtē. Prou. 17. Though thou ſhouldeſt braie a foole in a morter, among wheate braied with a peſtell: yet wil not his fooliſhneſſe depart from him. So that as long as we are in cuſtome with ſinne, the dore of Repentance is barred vp againſt vs.

The fift hinderance, is long eſcaping of puniſhment, for the wicked thereby are ſtarkened in ſin, & driuen off from repentance, euen as an old theefe that hath ſtolne a long time, and eſcapeth both priſon and gallowes, is animated more boldly to proceede in his wickedneſſe, thinking he ſhall ſo alwaies eſcape. So many filthy and looſe liuers go forward in their abhominations without Repentance, thinking that bicauſe God doth not incontinently puniſh them, and ſhew ſome manifeſt iudgement and ſigne of his wrath vpon them, therfore they ſhalbe acquited for altogither. Where

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as contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them down as allone as they had sinned, by thundring vpon one, and lightning vpon another, and raining fire and brimstone vpon the thirde, it would make them afraide. Hereupon it is saide in Pet. 2. 3. 4. This first vnderstand, that there shal come in the last daies mockers which wil walke after their lusts, and say, where is the promise of his comming? For since the fathers died, all things continue alike from the beginning of the creation. But let these men well know that when God hath delaied a long time, and prolonged the terme of the wicked, at length hee will shew that although he waited for their repentance, yet he forgate not their misdeeds, but registred them before him, and packed them vp vpon a great heape, to encrease the terrour of his wrath.

The first hinderance, is the beholding of other mens endes. For when some men that haue liued a wicked, and an vngratious life, and haue beene notorious sinners euen to the world-ward, so that euery man could point at them: yet if vpon their deathbed they can saie a fewe good wordes

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and cry God mercy, and say their prayers, and forgiue all the world, and so die quietly, it is maruailous to heare, how foolish people of the world, will exalt them, and iustifie them, saieng: He made a very good end as any man could make, he died as quiet as a Lambe, and set all things in good order before he died. Hærupon another wicked & monstrous varlet is encouraged to sinne. For thinketh he, such a man liued as lowsely as I, or any man elsse, and yet he made a very good end, and why may not I do so to, but alas these mens eyes are bleared. For to die quietly, is not to die godly, to cry God mercy for fashion, is not to haue God mercifull, to say a few prayers from tæth outward, is not to die in the faith of Christ, for many doe all this, and yet die miserably.

The last let, is hope of long life, for while men fæd, and besot themselues in this hope they war drunken in sinne, and deferre the day of repentãce. As the rich man in the xij. of Luke, dreaming of his long life, cast of all thought of God, and of the other life, and of Christes comming, & of repentance, and all good things, and said within himself: Soule

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thou hast much goodes layd vp for many yéeres, liue at ease, eate, drink, and take thy pastime. Thus the bleare eyed men of the world choke vp Repentance, and quite smother it, by doting themselues with hope of long life. Therefore my deare brethren, I beséech you by the mercies of God in the bowels of Iesus Christ, that none of all these common lettes may staie you from spéedie and vnfaigned Repentance: But that you may ouerslide them all, least vnhappilie you being found without Repentance, and taken tardie in your sinnes, should all perish and be damned, according to Christes sentence. Wherefore in conclusion, let vs with godly Ezechias be afraide of Gods threatnings, sorrow afore hand, stand in awe of GOD, examine our conscience, mourne for our sinnes, and lament inwardly, that when the wicked which haue swimmed in pleasures here below, shall enter into their eternall paines we may then, I say there, haue euerlasting peace & rest, that when Iesus Christ shall appéere from heauen with all his holy Angels, we may haue crownes of glory, and raigne with our GOD, and our

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Sauiour his Sonne, and all his Saintes and Angels, in the middest of all ioy, in the Heauens for euermore. To the which ioy he bring vs all, which hath so deerly bought vs, Iesus Christ the righteous: to whom with the Father, and the holy Ghost be all honour, glorie, praise, power, empire, and Dominion, now and for euermore.

Amen.

FINIS.